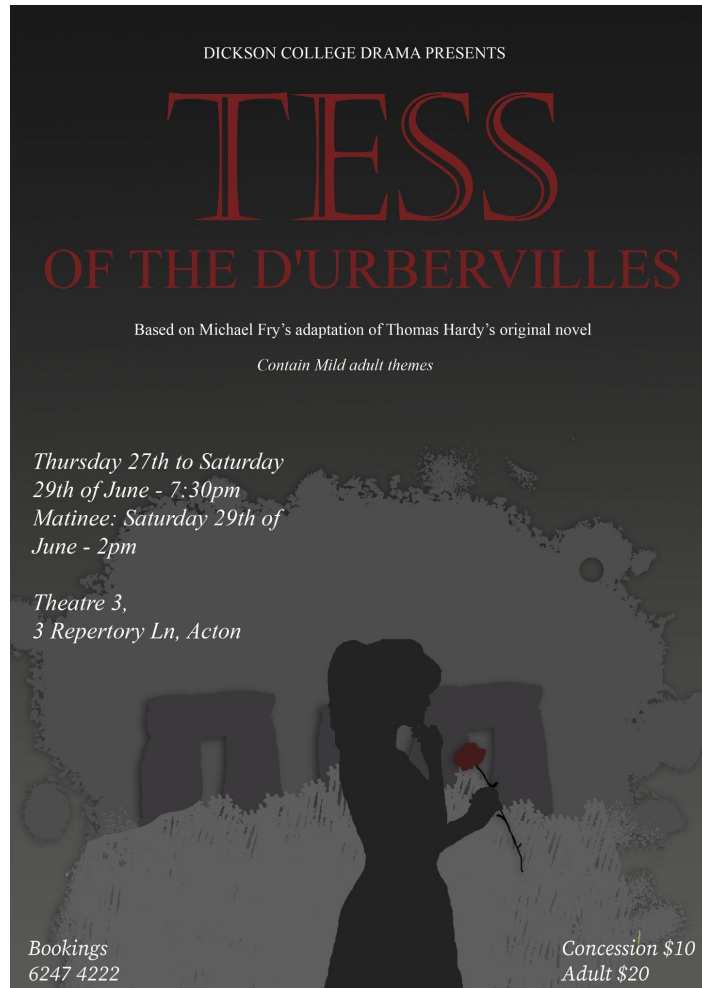


Tess of the D'Urbervilles
Dickson College Drama Production Promotional Poster
Misa Bui



Project Brief

I was tasked with creating a promotional A4 poster for the 2023 school drama production, Tess of D'urbervilles. The production is based on Thomas Hardy's original novel, and Michael Fry's adaptation of the story with elements of Greek tragedy. The final poster must be printed at an A4 size of 21 by 29.7 cm of 300dpi resolution and must be able to contain all necessary information whilst being visually appealing. The play is suitable for an audience of 11+, though its main audience is directed towards teenagers from ages 14-18, considering the actors are Year 11/12 Dickson College students (ages 15-18) revolving around the character of Tess Du'rberville, a 16-year-old girl. There may also be adult themes included

within the play which may disturb younger audiences. The time period of the play was the 19th century in England.

The most important part of the poster is the title. The title provides information on what the poster is about, in this case, it is Dickson College drama production's adaptation of the novel Tess of the D'urbervilles. The title should be the dominant focal point to captivate the audience's attention and engage them to read through the information. Thus, the text size has to be large or consist of bold colours to attract attention and guide the reader's eye to the dominant focal point. The call-to-action is also a crucial component in a promotional poster and should be the sub-dominant area. In this case, the call-to-action consists of the dates, venue, times, and booking information. The rest of the details, such as the introduction "Dickson College Drama Presents" and the caution warning of 'Mild Adult Themes', should be smaller.

Research

In terms of research, it is important to be familiar with the plot and main idea presented in Tess of the D'urbervilles. This meant being able to identify main themes, characterisation of the main character, physical context and settings, symbols and motifs. The next step would be to use the research to decide on the manipulation of the elements of design to suit the ideas presented in the novel, including particular colour and text styles.

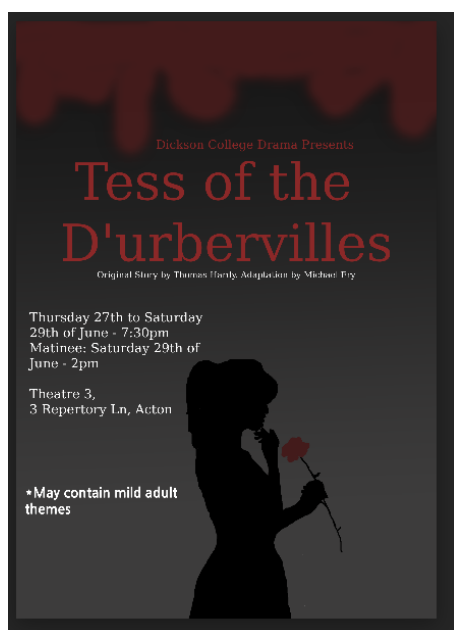
One of the main themes conveyed was societal injustice, especially the dominance of men over women, and the upper class over the lower class. Both the original and adaptation of the novel, Tess of the D'urbervilles follows a teenage girl in her pursuit for love. The novel is set in 19th century rural England and challenges the sexual morals of society within that time. The main character, Tess, finds herself fighting for her rights especially having been in an abusive relationship with her wealthy and manipulative husband, Alec D'urberville. It dawns on her that she is trapped by society's discriminating morality. Whilst she fell in love with a nice farmer named Angel Clare, his greatest weakness was his idealistic love of Tess by forming expectations without getting to know her situation. Tess struggles to express her individuality until she murders Alec, freeing herself from his control. Nonetheless, she was

killed at the end by the police as a cold-blooded murderer rather than taking into account the fact that she was defending her rights as a woman.

Red is a strong and attractive colour that could be used to represent Tess's fierce and passionate but risky pursuit of love, portraying her as a character who fights to express herself. Red also foreshadows the danger that comes with being a woman of the lower-class during 19th century England. A red rose or a red scarf/cloak/hood around Tess could be used to symbolise her longing for love and desire to express herself. Neutral colours such as grey and black could be used in the background to further emphasise an ominous atmosphere of danger.

Considering that the play is set in the 19th century, the poster could incorporate serif typefaces for a traditional but authoritative look, such as Times New Roman. The serif typefaces indicates the heaviness of history, particularly useful to support the idea of society's discriminatory nature during the 19th century. Supporting background could consist of a faded/desaturated countryside, or significant setting such as Stone Henge, the place where Tess was killed.

Concepts

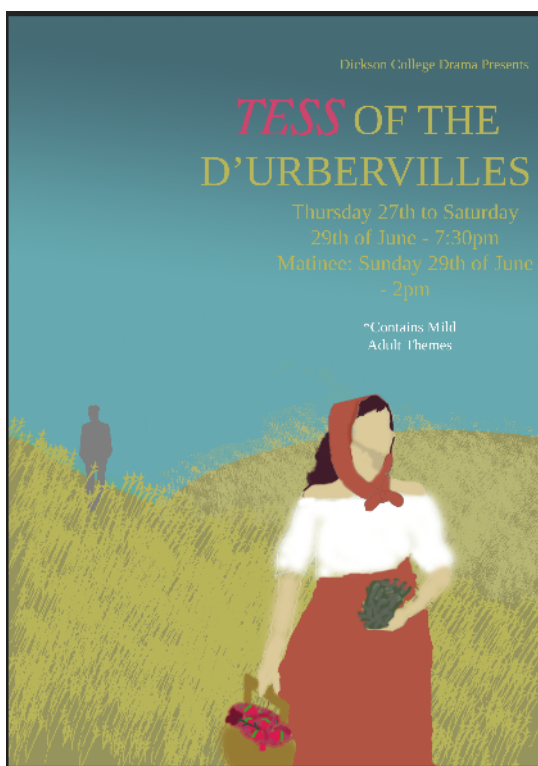


Concept 1

The first concept solely features a shadow figure of Tess holding a red rose (symbolic for love), establishing the idea that the whole drama would resolve around her. The entire background is a faded gradient composed of the neutral colours black and grey, which works to introduce the tension and danger within the drama. There is a red blood running down from the top of the page to create a feeling of risk and danger.

The main dominant text (title) is aligned in the middle of the design, above the female figure. The rest of the information could be found on the side of the page.

The typeface Times New Roman executed on the title of the play should appear more attractive, as it doesn't stand out from the rest of the information and visuals on the design. To further develop it, the text could either be capitalised or the font could change.



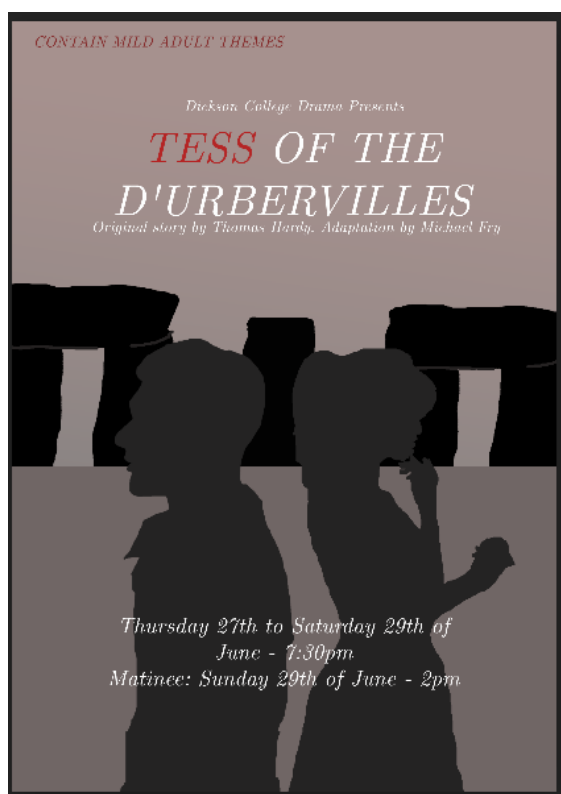
Concept 2

The second concept has a different feel to the previous design, featuring the rural landscape of the countryside. Tess is portrayed as a young, innocent girl through her clothing, and is positioned on the middle-right of the page. Tess seems to be lost in her own thoughts as her

head glances to the right. She is carrying a bucket/basket full of strawberries with a rose on top. There is a smaller figure of a faded gentleman located on the left side. The words on the top right hand side of the design.

Overall, the colours on the design work with each other harmoniously. The design incorporates two main complementary colours, red and green, both have been desaturated to avoid being too bright or overwhelming to the eye. The positioning of the two characters on the design create asymmetrical balance.

However, the poster looks too light-hearted and calming to fully capture the full dramatic story following the plot. It may also be considered outdated or boring by the target audience, who may expect a bit of action, drama and suspense. The background could have been further desaturated to incorporate a greyscale colour scheme, or darkened for better effects.



Concept 3

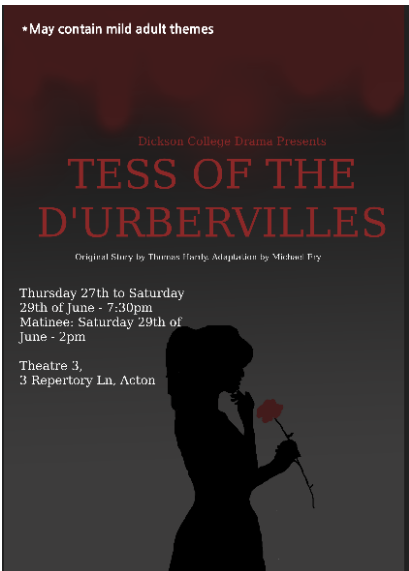
The third concept focuses on a close-up angle on two shadow figures of a male and female standing back to back. The two people are positioned in the middle to create a sense of symmetrical balance. The background behind them captures the famous England landmark

of Stone Henge. The rest of the information on the page are text, and aligned on the centre of the page.

Whilst the other two designs have a focal visual of Tess, the third concept establishing the relationship between two main characters, Tess and Angel. The design itself looks very clean.

In the end, I went with the first concept displaying the silhouette of Tess to reflect upon her situation. The dark background, red text and the symbolic red rose works well together to depict the sense of danger surrounding Tess as the story progresses.

Development

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|  | <p>The initial concept</p> |
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Contain mild adult themes

Dickson College Drama Presents

TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES

Original Story by Thomas Hardy. Adaptation by Michael Fry

Thursday 27th to Saturday
29th of June - 7:30pm
Matinee: Saturday 29th of
June - 2pm

Theatre 3,
3 Repertory Ln, Acton



The blood hanging from the top of the design was removed to be replaced by a blood-stain design.

Contain mild adult themes

Dickson College Drama Presents

TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES

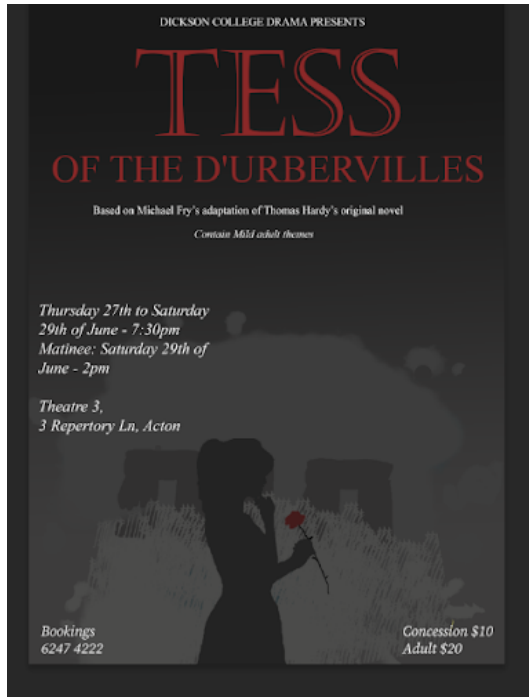
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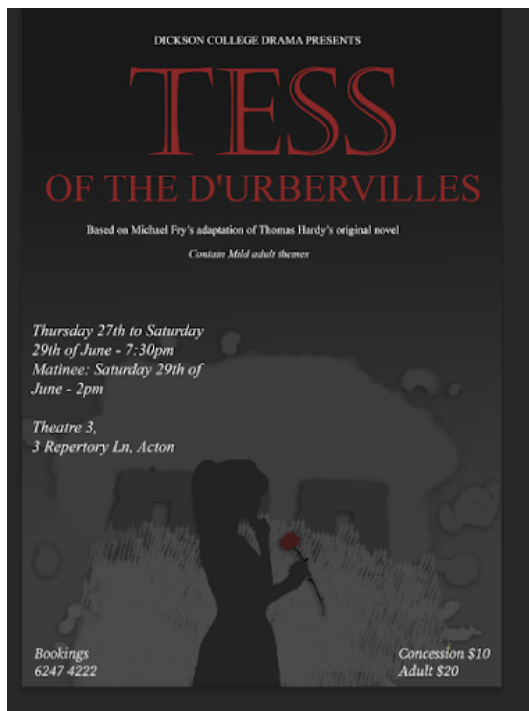
Theatre 3,
3 Repertory Ln, Acton



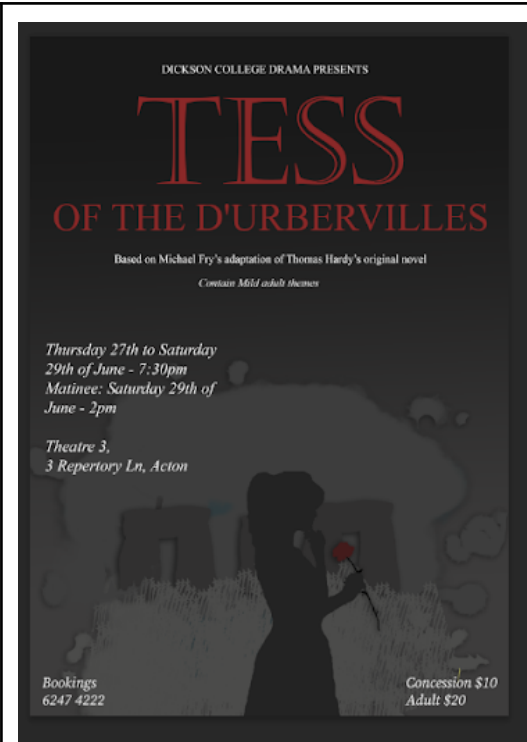
Experimentation with font choice



Most of the text on the page, including the title was capitalised so that the poster appears bolder and more dramatic.

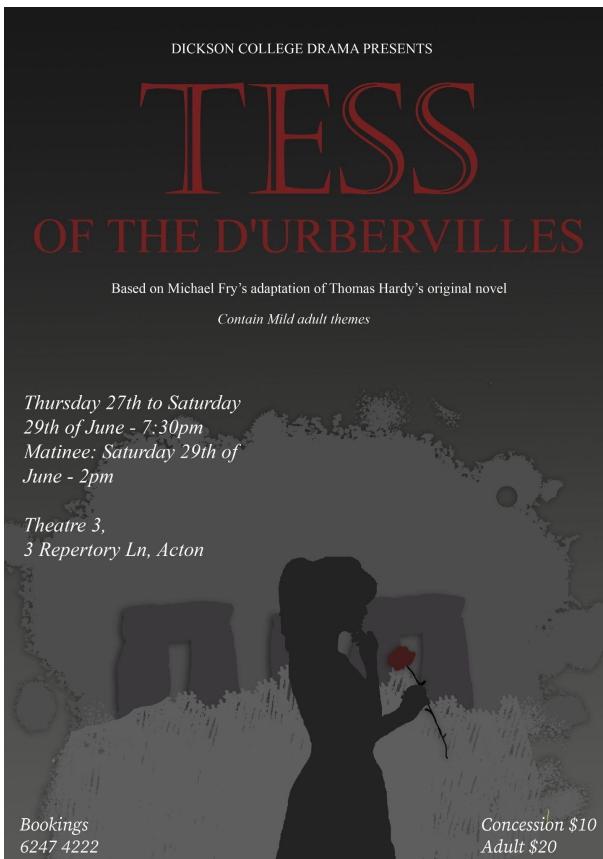


Drop shadow effects were added to the blood-stain shape so that it looks more dramatic and intensified. The drop shadow was also added to the rose and and the background of Stonehenge.



The silhouette figure of Tess was shifted to the right so that the figure does not get in the way of the text on the side. The grass in the background was scaled downwards so that the Stonehenge background appeared more visible.

Final Design



Evaluation

For the client connection task, I was asked to design a promotional poster for the Dickson College drama production. The layout of a design is an essential part to structure information and guide the viewer to important parts, particularly the arrangement of text. The dominant focal point would be the title of the play "Tess of the D'urbervilles", this would give contextual information to the audience on what the play is based on. The other important information on the poster would be the dates, time, venue and booking information, as this would essentially be the call-to-action for the audience to make a booking and navigate to the venue on the day of the play. This information becomes the subdominant focal point in the design located under the title for visibility. However, it was aligned to the left side of the page so that it doesn't get in the way of the visuals. The rest of the information on Dickson College, the original book and adaptation of the play was not as important and were made to a smaller font.

The ideas of danger, progression of character and pursuit of love were captured clearly from the dark background colour. The gradient of black and grey gives the poster a mysterious and menacing appearance, corresponding to the threats surrounding the main character. The colour red was also used to reinforce this sense of danger awaiting Tess from the title (focal point).

The design also incorporates the texture of a blood-stain shape, consisting of the silhouette figure of Tess holding a rose on a faded Stonehenge background. Blood is often a symbol of death and violence, and in this case, the shape's texture was used to hint the unhealthy and threatening relationship between Tess and her abusive husband, Alec D'urberville. This was a major part within the story as in order to escape from him, Tess has to kill Alec. Even so, this got her killed in the end. Overall, the poster could potentially attract teenagers and adults anticipating a dramatic spectacle inclusive of tragedy elements that is inspired by Michael Fry's adaptation of the story.

There were several ways the text could be improved, especially the information on dates and times. This part looked too bunched up and took up almost half of the width of the page. This

gets in the way of the title and visuals at the centre of the page, whilst leaves a large gap of negative space at the bottom of the page. The width of the text body needs to decrease so that the text flows cohesively down the page rather than across. The words 'Thursday' and 'Saturday' could have also been shortened to 'Thurs' and 'Sat' respectively to further decrease the area of the text body. Essentially, the information on bookings and pricing should have been aligned to the left side of the page under the address as it takes up a bit of effort the viewers to find. By allocating these text parts directly under the address, the viewer's eye could easily flow from the dates to the booking information, an important call-to-action.